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# The Other Woman

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# The Other Woman

*First produced at Westminster Town Hall, February 17, 1896.*

## CHARACTERS

SILVIE GRAHAME (*a young widow*) . MISS KATE RORKE.  
ENID VIVIAN (*an actress*) . MRS. CLEMENT SCOTT.

*And at Her Majesty's Theatre, November 11, 1897.*

SILVIE GRAHAMF (*a young widow*) . MISS WINIFRED EMERY.  
ENID VIVIAN (*an actress*) . MISS ESMÉ BERINGER.

Plays twenty minutes. Time—present.

## PROPERTIES

Guitar for Silvie and a bunch of scarlet anemones. Bunch of violets and letter on table. Bell (off). Two brown paper covered parts (off).



# The Other Woman

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**SCENE.**—**SILVIE GRAHAME'S boudoir.** *Fireplace down L. Low armchair between it and table L. C. Chair R. of table, and couch or settee R. Ornaments, books, music, flowers. Framed cabinet picture of a man in a not too conspicuous position. Tea things on table. It is twilight; the air is full of the scent of lilies and violets, and in a low chair in the firelight SILVIE sits, touching her guitar absently, and singing dreamily to herself as she looks into the fire. The curtain rises as she is singing, and she finishes the verse.*

**SUNG—**

“My true love hath my heart, and I have his;  
By just exchange the one to the other given,  
His heart is mine, and mine he cannot miss.  
There never was a better bargain given.”

**NOTE.**—*The opening bars of Marzial's duet in canon “Friendship” is suitable for the song on raising the curtain.*

**NOTE.**—*If the actress does not sing, some one else must do it and conclude before the curtain rises, but the effect is not so good.*

**SILVIE (spoken).** “My true love hath my heart, and I have his”; that is Jack's song, but *I* think it wants two voices to make the harmony; somehow it sounds poor when one sings alone. “My true love hath my heart, and I have his.” Dear old Jack! Does he care for me as I care for him? Was there ever a time, I wonder, when I *didn't* care for him? even when I was a tiny thing in white frocks, and Cousin Jack used to lift me in his arms to pick the reddest peaches on the old south wall at home, and save up all his pocket money at school, to buy me white mice. Oh! what a life those white mice led! He always called me his little sister then; Jack never had a sister of his own, but somehow he never seemed like a brother

to me. Does he really love me, I wonder? Life is made up of such little, little things. If Lady Vere hadn't fallen ill and asked me to chaperon Claire, I should never have wintered in Rome, and if I hadn't wintered in Rome, I shouldn't have met Jack again, and if I hadn't—oh! good gracious, I shouldn't like to think of that at all. But when we did meet, he looked as if some sorrow had overshadowed his path, and that night in the Doria Gardens when he asked me to marry him, he said he would write me the story of his life, and I promised him his answer in a month, and now . . . here is his letter, and I must give him his answer to-night. . . . To-night! (*Reads.*) "My dearest,"—Ah! how *nice* it sounds! "My dearest,—Before you give me your answer, I want to tell you the story of the years that have passed since we last met. Ten years ago! It's a long time, and much has happened since then. You were a sunny-haired child, and I a hot-headed impetuous youth, eager to go out into the world to find fame and fortune. I went, and found instead—starvation and a garret, for I was too proud to ask the family for help." Well, I like him all the better for that. "In those Bohemian days I slaved almost day and night at my pictures to find even bread for my mother and little brothers." Oh! I can't *bear* to think of that time. "Then the woman who embittered my whole life crossed my path." Ah! I *knew* it was a woman. It always *is* a woman who is at the bottom of everything. "She was an actress, and I fell in love with her, and she promised to marry me, but I was so poor and she had no engagement for months, so we waited and waited, until one day the luck turned, and old Uncle Howard, as you know, left me all his money." Yes, that is very odd. Jack never would touch a penny of that money, and he never would tell me why. "Then a strange thing happened. She suddenly wrote and said she had changed her mind, and we were better apart, and so—she vanished out of the story and left me broken-hearted. I think I am getting over it now. We are both older, and we have both seen trouble. Silvie, could you care for a man who has outlived his dreams?" *If* I could care! Why! if twenty women threw him over, and he came to me in the end, I should care still. "Have you forgotten the scent of the violets in the Doria Gardens when we sat there last? I send you a knot of them. We shall meet at the Stauntons to-night; will you wear them this evening if my answer is to be—'Yes'? But if I see you wearing the scarlet anemones you are so fond of, then I shall know you have no welcome for me."

No welcome for him? Dear old Jack! I think I shall wear violets to-night. Oh! I shall *have* to; scarlet anemones would do so badly with a yellow dress! (*Bell rings off.*) Good gracious! There's a visitor! Oh, my goodness, it must be that Miss Vivian come to read that part with me for the Veres' theatricals next month! I had forgotten all about the appointment. I wonder what she's like! I don't know much about actresses—except one, perhaps, and I hate her! She's coming up. Where is my book? I haven't learned a word of it! I must have left it up-stairs!

(*Exit hurriedly, and, after a minute's pause, enter ENID, shown in by a maid, who says, "My mistress will be down in a minute, ma'am," and exit.*)

ENID. What a pretty room! (*Wanders round it.*) Plenty of books and flowers! Mrs. Grahame has evidently good taste. I only hope she has some idea of acting, and that she won't be like my last amateur pupil, who made an appointment with me on a Monday, and when she came informed me that she was going to play Juliet on Friday, and would I show her how to do it, and that she hadn't learned a word of her part yet, but it was sure to be all right on the night, because her gowns were so lovely, and all her friends were coming to see her. I wouldn't have taken this pupil if Mrs. Neville hadn't asked me to do it as a personal favor. I can afford to be independent now. Oh! Here she is. (*Rises as SIL. enters; there is a pause as they look at each other, then a simultaneous exclamation of "Silvie!" and "Enid!" as SIL. rushes at ENID and kisses her warmly.*)

SIL. Enid! Oh, Enid! How glad I am to see you! Where have you come from, and where have you been all these years I have lost sight of you? You dear thing! Come and sit down and take off your things and tell me all about everything. Why, how many years is it since we were at school at Madame Dupont's together? It must have been before the flood at least, it seems so long ago.

ENID (*loosening her cloak*). More years than either of us care to count, Silvie. Let me look at you, dear. Well, in spite of your antediluvian reminiscences you seem to me to wear remarkably well. You haven't changed much since the days when you were Silvie Adair, and the wildest girl in all the old school at Neuchatel!

SIL. You haven't altered much either, Enid; now we'll just have tea comfortably together, like old times, and I'll tell the maid to say I can't see that woman to-night. She must come another day. (*Pouring out tea.*)

ENID. What woman?

SIL. Why, some horrid Miss Vivian who was coming to-night to coach me in my part for that piece at the Veres' next month. I made an appointment with her, but I can easily say, "Not at home."

ENID. I wouldn't do that, dear, if I were you.

SIL. Why not?

ENID (*quietly*). Because, dear, I am Miss Vivian, but I had no idea you were the Mrs. Grahame I had made an appointment with.

SIL. (*staring at her*). You, Enid? What do you mean? Your name is Grey, and you are not an actress.

ENID. Yes, dear, I am. (*Laughing.*) Don't look at me like that, Silvie. Actresses are very like other women, I assure you.

SIL. But I don't understand. Tell me all about it.

ENID. There isn't much to tell. You know I always had a dramatic turn, even at school. When my mother died in Paris I found myself thrown on my own resources, and if it hadn't been for an old friend of hers I don't know what I should have done. He is an actor himself, and he saw me do Lady Macbeth as an amateur, and he thought me so promising that he got me an engagement in town to play a soubrette part in a problem play, and I walked on and said "Your ladyship looks charming" for two hundred and fifty nights.

SIL. Oh; fancy a problem play running as long as that nowadays. But, Enid, how could you?

ENID. Oh! toward the end of the time I did try to give a new reading of the part. I said (*dramatically*), "Your ladyship looks charming!" But the leading lady complained I put her out.

SIL. Spiteful thing!

ENID. That's what she said. Oh! an actress's life isn't by any means all enjoyment and admiration, as some people seem to think. It means real hard work, and want of work, and very often a struggle to make both ends meet; but I love my profession and I'm getting on. I play leading parts in town now. I have very often coached amateurs, though I had made up my mind you should be the last, but (*laughing*) I

didn't expect to see you, Silvie, when I took Mrs. Grahame as a pupil! There! that's enough about me. Now tell me all about yourself.

SIL. Oh! what have I got to tell you? I'm just the ordinary humdrum society person, not half as interesting as you are. I've done everything in the orthodox fashion. I grew up, and came out, and was presented, just like hundreds of other girls.

ENID. And you married.

SIL. Of course. Just like hundreds of other girls; my mother made a match for me, my first season, and I accepted Mr. Grahame, a man who was heir to a title and £30,000 a year. All my girl friends hugged me and said, "Oh, you dear thing, I *am* so glad." Then they all went home and said to each other, "Oh, my dear, she has managed to catch him at last; she has been long enough about it, but what he can see in her . . ." Don't look at me like that, Enid. I know they all did, every one does. It's a feminine privilege! Then we were married and it was all very dull and proper, but he was very good to me. Six months later Mr. Grahame died, before he came into the property, so here I am, a widow, with a modest pittance, and . . . my liberty.

ENID. And is that so precious to you, Silvie?

SIL. Precious? Why, of course it is! And now, having got it, like a foolish woman, I'm going to stake it again to-night.

ENID. Against what?

SIL. (*dreamily*). Against . . . a knot of violets and the broken pieces of a man's heart. Is it worth it, I wonder? Good gracious! What nonsense I'm talking! As if a man were ever heart-whole! Enid, what a long time ago it is since you and I used to wander up and down under the old chestnut alleys in the school-garden and plan out our lives, and dream of the sort of men we should marry, and how differently it has all turned out.

ENID (*laughing*). Yes. I remember you were to have a villa on the Mediterranean and a flat in Paris. I think you proposed to live chiefly on chocolate creams and apricots; and the man of your choice—who was to be dark-eyed and raven-haired, with the loveliest tenor voice in the world—was to stand under your window with his guitar and sing "Spirto Gentil" in the moonlight! Did any of your lovers do that, Silvie?

SIL. No, they *didn't*! This isn't the climate for romance. Fancy an Englishman trying to play the guitar at the corner of Berkeley Square, with a bitter east wind blowing! But *you*

needn't laugh, Enid. I remember very well what *your* lover was to be like. Golden hair and blue eyes, and the finest painter of his day; nothing second-rate would do for you. You *know* you used to be always wandering down to the old orchard to look for him among the apple blossoms. Have you found him yet?

ENID (*sadly*). If I have, he was only a day-dream and has gone with the apple blossoms long ago.

SIL. Oh, Enid! you might tell me all about it, dear; we are such old friends, and I've opened the journal of my life pretty freely for your inspection.

ENID. Dear, the book of one's life is bound up in two volumes. The first is called "Anticipation," and the second "Reminiscences"; between the two, there is one little chapter—on Love! It is very short and very sweet, and one is loth to come to the last word. One would dearly love to spell it all over again, but you can only read that chapter once, and I have folded down the page in my book, Silvie, and turned over a new leaf. Ah! never mind that now. Tell me, who is the man to whom you propose to surrender your liberty to-night?

SIL. It's my Cousin Jack. You know we were brought up together. My people gave him a home when his father died. I always cared for him, but he went away to earn his living and he became an artist.

ENID (*thoughtfully*). His name is Jack, and he is an artist.

SIL. Yes, and we lost sight of him for ten years. In the meanwhile I grew up, and married Mr. Grahame, but I never forgot Jack, and in the winter I met him again in Rome and he asked me to marry him, and I promised him his answer to-night.

ENID. And your answer will be—

SIL. A knot of violets, which, being interpreted, means "Yes." Dear old Jack! I think I've loved him all my life, and I want to make up to him for all the other woman made him suffer.

ENID. Then there *was* another woman?

SIL. There always *is*, isn't there? in every play and every novel, and even in real life—another woman, or another man, as the case may be. Yes. She was an actress, and engaged to Jack in his Bohemian days, and she jilted him for some horrid actor, Jack thinks, but she never explained, and it nearly

broke his heart. *I hate her.* Though I suppose I should have hated her more if Jack had married her.

*(All through this scene ENID should show by her face that it is gradually dawning on her that they love the same man.)*

ENID. And his name, dear?

SIL. Why, I tell you—Jack.

ENID *(impatiently)*. Yes, dear, yes, go on.

SIL. Well, then, next week probably you'll see a paragraph in the *Morning Post* to the effect that a marriage has been arranged, and will shortly take place, between Silvie, widow of the late Ernest Grahame, Esq., and the rising young painter, John Leslie Murray. *(ENID suppresses an exclamation, and SIL. turns to her.)* How tired and pale you look, Enid; is the room too warm for you?

ENID *(mastering herself)*. No, dear, no—but—I've been working rather hard lately—and—*(looking at clock)* if you want me to help you with your part, Silvie, we had better get to work, for I must be at the theatre by eight.

SIL. Good gracious! I had forgotten all about it. Where *is* the book? There! I've left it up-stairs after all. I shan't be a minute, Enid.

*(Runs off humming, "My true love hath my heart.")*

ENID *(watches her off, then stands looking into fire)*. "My true love hath my heart"—Jack's old song. He has even taught her that. So he told her I threw him over for another man. Well, of course he thinks so; how should he think otherwise, and how should *she* know the real reason I gave him up? How should she know that the condition by which Jack inherits his uncle's money is, that he should marry his cousin Silvie Grahame? Jack never thought I knew, but I did. How *could* I stand in the way of his good fortune? If it had only been we two we could have faced the world together, but there were others to think of, so I left him and worked hard and tried to forget, and now success and fortune come knocking at my door, but love has gone, and life . . . seems empty.

*Enter SIL.*

SIL. Here is the book, dear. Now you know you'll just have to show me everything, for I know I shan't be able to play



it. I told the Veres I should ruin their piece, but they *would* have me. One comfort is it's only for a charity, and —

ENID. And that covers a multitude of sins?

SIL. Of course, and the papers are bound to say something pretty about you. They can always describe one's gowns, and, after all, you know, that's the principal thing.

ENID (*laughing*). I thought so. She is every bit as bad as my amateur Juliet! Well, let me see the book. What did you say the piece was?

SIL. Oh! It's some silly romantic thing about two women who both love the same man. Now do I look as if I could play that sort of thing?

ENID. Well. (*Smiling.*) You don't look as if tragedy were your line. I wouldn't attempt Lady Macbeth just yet, if I were you.

SIL. Lady Macbeth? Let's see, what did she do? I never can remember Shakespeare; she is in Shakespeare, isn't she? Oh, yes, of course. I remember; she is the lady who used to wander about in the dead of night and say she couldn't get her hands clean, unless she had a cake of Pears' soap immediately, or something of that sort. She'd be a lovely advertisement for Pears, if he sent her about town like a sandwich man!

ENID (*severely*). Don't be frivolous, and don't abuse Shakespeare. I won't have it.

SIL. Polly Eccles is much more in my line, she is much nicer than Lady Macbeth. Now I could play Polly, but these two silly women, I haven't patience with either of them. Let's see, what's the name of the piece? Oh, yes! "The Other Woman," by Charles Meredith. It's rather a new piece.

ENID (*starting nervously*). "The Other Woman!" (*Aside.*) It is our own story over again, and how can I teach it to her?

SIL. Do you know it?

ENID (*recovering herself*). Yes, oh, yes, I know it. I played it for months on tour last year.

SIL. Oh! that's lovely, then you can show me everything.

ENID. Which part do you play?

SIL. Oh! I play Claire, the woman who is engaged to Archie first.

ENID. Very well, then I will read for Phyllis.

SIL. All right. Let's take that big scene first between the two women, because that's the most difficult part.

ENID (*reading*). "Table L. C., chairs R. and L. of it.

Fireplace L., couch R." (*This can be altered to suit the arrangement of stage.*) This will do very well. "Phyllis runs in singing with a bunch of flowers and proceeds to arrange them. Claire is sitting by fire." You're sitting by the fire.

(SIL. *sits in low chair, turning her back on audience.*)

ENID. Not like that, Silvie, you've got your back to where the audience should be.

SIL. (*rising*). Well, how am I to know where the audience will be when I can't see them?

ENID. My dear, have you *no* imagination? Can't you picture to yourself the night of your performance and the rows and rows of excited faces in front of you?

SIL. My dear Enid, you *have* an imagination! Did you ever see (*imitating*) rows and rows of excited faces at an amateur performance? I never did. (*She resumes her seat, but more facing audience.*)

ENID. Now then—"Phyllis runs in singing." (*ENID goes out, or behind screen, and on her entrance has completely changed her style. She now plays the part of a light-hearted girl, and runs in singing, "My true love hath my heart, and I, and I have his," then pulls herself up suddenly R.*) Ah! no, no! any song but that.

SIL. Why, where did you learn that song, Enid?

ENID. Silvie, will you attend to your part? That is not in the book. (*ENID changes the song to something gay.*)

SIL. (*in a cheerful sing-song voice, reading*). "And this is the woman for whom I have wrecked my life! and to whom I have given up the man I love. I hate her. I hate her. (*Rising.*) Oh! how I hate her."

ENID. Good gracious, Silvie, not in that tone of voice; don't be so cheerful over it.

SIL. Well, I can't be dismal over it when the man we are to be in love with is that idiotic little Charlie Fane. I'd give him up to any other woman with pleasure. Fancy the way he'll make love to us! What is it he has to say? Oh, yes! (*Reading.*) "Claire! I love you with a passion that burns my inmost soul. I lay the devotion of a lifetime at your feet, and a heart that beats but for you alone." Now fancy Charlie saying all that, with a glass in his eye, that falls out with a click whenever there is a comma. It would be so different now if it were Jack!

ENID (*aside*). Yes, it would be *so* different if it were Jack! Do go on, Silvie; we shall never do any work at this rate.

SIL. I can't help it, dear. I must be frivolous; I'm so happy to-night. Where was I? Oh, yes! (*Reading*.) "I hate her, how I hate her!" What am I to do with my hands, Enid?

ENID. Why, what do you generally do with them? Don't think about them.

SIL. I never do till I come on the stage, and then I become suddenly conscious that I have a pair, and that every one is looking at them!

ENID. Well, you've got to know the text before you can think of your movements. Now, I'll go on. (*Reading*.) "Claire, I don't think you are very kind."

SIL. (*reading*). "Why not?"

ENID (*same bus.*). "You haven't congratulated me on my engagement."

SIL. (*cheerfully*). "On your engagement! No, I haven't."

ENID (*in despair*). Silvie! Silvie! not like that! Can't you realize what it is to this woman who has given up the man she loves, and finds herself face to face with the woman he is going to marry. Give me your part and let me try and show you. (*They exchange parts.*)

SIL. Well, it's no use my trying to play that sort of tragic part. This one would suit me much better. Now then. (*Reads.*) "Claire, I don't think you're very kind."

ENID (*reading*). "Why not?"

SIL. (*same business*). "You haven't congratulated me on my engagement yet."

ENID. "On your engagement? No, I haven't—yet."

SIL. "And are you not going to?" (*Aside, reading.*) I will get the truth out of her, and know if she was engaged to Archie or not. You know, Claire, rumor says that you were once fond of Archie."

ENID. "Rumor says many things."

SIL. "And that you behaved badly to him."

ENID. "Does it?" (*Wearily.*) That is nothing to me."

SIL. "Archie told me the story of the other woman he had cared for, when we were first engaged, how she threw him over for another man."

ENID. "Then he said what was not true. She gave him up of her own free will, because she thought it was her duty."

SIL. "Her duty?"

ENID. "Yes. Ah! what should such a one as you, who have lived in luxury all your days, know of life and its stern necessities? Life has many pathways, though they all lead toward the sunset and yours has been level and bordered with roses all the way. But, ah! life is so hard for some of us, and the way is rocky and steep to climb! (*Bitterly.*) What should you know of the story of that other woman's life, of her love, of her sorrows, of her sacrifice?"

SIL. (*placidly shutting her book*). Now, that's what I call rubbish. You're supposed to throw a man over for his good. (*With disgust.*) His good! No, you stick to a man for his good, you throw him over—well, to amuse yourself.

ENID. No, I don't.

SIL. What?

ENID. I mean she doesn't. You don't see the difference, Silvie. He sticks to you, yes—that means he takes you asparagus in March and peaches at a guinea a piece, but if she sticks to him it means that she shares his last crust.

SIL. No, no, you'll never make me believe she hadn't a better offer. Share his last crust indeed! I'd have helped him make his bread.

ENID. Ah! have you tried? Shall I paint the picture for you? I can see it. Listen then. (*During this scene ENID gets more and more carried away by the words of the book which tell her own story, and she finally flings it away and speaks without it.*) "Away in the artist quarter of London the other woman lived on the fourth floor and the painter above her on the top story. She was an actress, quite alone, and only beginning in her profession, and he had the care of a crippled mother and two young brothers, who looked to him for everything. Life had not been too sunny for either of them, but they loved each other, and hoped to marry when things looked brighter. She helped to look after his invalid mother, and many a day it made the girl's heart ache to be unable to give the invalid the comforts she so sorely needed. Times grew worse instead of better. Winter came on and she was unable to get an engagement and he sat far into the night at work, and she would hear him above her setting his easel in the chill light of a freezing London dawn, while she lay awake and wondered where the money was to come from to pay her next week's rent. (*Passionately.*) Oh! You women who have never felt the want of money know little of the bitter pinch of poverty and the crushing sense of failure when the picture

are unsold, and the managers tell you the engagement is filled up. How could that other woman who barely earned her own living become an additional burden to him who had already three to care for? Then, one day, when things were at their worst, she learned, ah! not from him, that she stood between him and fortune, between his mother and the comforts they could not give her. She saw that there could be no place in his life for her. Oh! Life is very hard for some of us, and she had a bitter struggle, but she conquered in the end ——”

SIL. (*half frightened*). Enid! Enid! is that all in the book?

ENID. Ah, yes! It is printed in the book and it is written in my heart. Listen now to the end. “So she wrote to him and said it was better for them to part since there could be no prospect of their marrying, and then . . . she went out into the night alone, away from all she loved and held most dear. From that day their luck seemed to turn. She got a good provincial engagement and he sold his big picture. Now she has made her name and the managers give her what she asks, but fortune has come too late, and she would give her London triumphs and all she possesses in the world to be back in the old struggling days and hear his voice once more and see his face again.”

(SIL. *who through this scene has been gradually realizing that ENID is not acting but is telling her the story of her life, has gone to a side table and taken from it a framed photo of JACK; when ENID ceases speaking she crosses to her and puts the picture into her hands, saying very softly—*)

SIL. Was his face like that?

ENID (*with a cry*). Jack! . . . (*Looks at it passionately.*) Ah! it was cruel of you to tell her I loved another man! I never cared for any one but you, Jack! . . . Oh! Jack! (*She breaks down and sobs passionately with her head on the table.*)

SIL. Then she is the woman Jack loved and she has been telling me her own story. (*There is silence in the room for a moment, broken only by ENID'S low sobbing; SIL. stands and looks at her, then she goes slowly to the table and picks up the knot of violets and the bunch of anemones; she looks at them for a moment, then very quietly to herself.*) What did this letter say? “I send you a knot of violets—will you wear to-night, if my answer is to be ‘Yes’? But if you wear

the scarlet anemones you are so fond of I shall know you have no welcome for me."

(SIL. looks at the flowers for a moment in doubt, then she pulls herself together, and with a tender look at ENID she lays the knot of violets on JACK'S picture which lies in ENID'S lap and fastening the anemones at her breast she goes out sadly and very slowly.)

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